



MEDIA RELEASE

Rains Welcomed, But Not Feral Turtle Doves

The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) today urged Alice Springs residents to join the fight against feral turtle doves, with recent rain sending the birds into a breeding frenzy.

PWS wildlife officer Jon Delaine said thousands of feral turtle doves now live in Alice Springs, competing with native birds for food and urban habitat.

“About 10 turtle doves came to Alice Springs in the 1990s as aviary birds but since escaping, their feral population now number several thousand, with the situation likely to worsen following recent rain in town,” Mr Delaine said.

“Rain increases the amount of food available and while these birds are not seasonal breeders, the warm weather means the chicks have a greater chance of surviving than they would during the winter months.

“Feral turtle doves are aggressive, dominant birds that push other smaller native birds such as honeyeaters, parrots and native doves out of suburban backyards.

“In the interests of native birds, we ask that residents destroy the nests and eggs of feral turtle doves, with a high powered hose or broom handle suitable for reaching nests in high places.

“Turtle Doves build loose flat nest structures made of twigs and sticks and lay two white eggs. Nests are typically built less than three metres off the ground.”

“People unsure as to whether or not they have the correct species of bird can also contact the NT Parks and Wildlife Service 8951 8283 or Wildcare on 0419 221 128 for assistance.”

Mr Delaine said feral turtle doves are particularly attracted to Alice Springs because non-native gardens tend to have trees, such as palms or citrus trees, which are more suited to this species of bird.

“Increasing the number of native plants while decreasing the number of non-native plants is one way of joining the fight against feral turtle doves,” Mr Delaine said.

“Removing excess pet food and water as well as enclosing chicken yards are other useful tips.

“While recent rain is welcome, feral turtle doves are certainly not.”

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Jon Delaine on 8951 8283

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